



THE LOST OASES

AHMED HASSANEIN

Oxford-educated Egyptian diplomat and geographic explorer, Hassanein Bey (Ahmad Muhammad Hassanayn), with two companions and a few cranky camels, trekked south across the vast sandy Libyan desert, from the Mediterranean to the Sudan, in the process rediscovering and confirming the locations of two “lost” oases known previously only through “vague tradition.” More than just a record of scientific and geographic discovery, the book evinces a deep respect and reverence for the beauty and cruelty of the desert. In the author’s own words, “In the silent infinity of the desert, body, mind, and soul are cleansed. Man feels nearer to God, feels the presence of a mighty Power from which nothing any longer diverts his attention. Little by little an inevitable fatalism and an unshakable belief in the wisdom of God’s decree bring resignation, even to the extent of offering his life to the desert without grudge. There are times when he feels that it really does not matter...” This is a modestly written record of an epic adventure, one which could not have succeeded without the support of King Fouad I of Egypt and the tolerant friendship of Sayed Idris El Senussi, head of the mysterious Senussi Brotherhood in Kufra that generally did not welcome western explorers.

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